

ROCHESTER HISTORY

Edited by BLAKE McKELVEY, *City Historian*

VOL. XXI

JANUARY, 1959

No. 1

The Rochester Area in American History

BY BLAKE McKELVEY

Although George Washington never "slept here," many travelers on "Clinton's Big Ditch" did visit or settle at Rochester. Thus the Erie Canal, which did so much to develop and unite the country, also linked the Flour City's growth with that of America at large. This is but one example of the many respects in which local and national development have coincided to make history.

Of course American history is more than the sum of its parts. While the developments within broad geographic regions and individual cities are important aspects of the larger story, they are but parts and not always irreplaceable parts of the whole. Each community has a history of its own which, however, can never be understood without reference to its broader setting. Yet a full comprehension of the transformation of America from a sparsely inhabited wilderness into a great nation may be enhanced by studying the repercussions of that development on a specific town. Moreover the larger synthesis of national history can often be brought to life by visualizing the local setting of significant events and people.

ROCHESTER HISTORY, published quarterly by the Rochester Public Library, distributed free at the Library, by mail 25 cents per year. Address correspondence to the City Historian, Rochester Public Library, 115 South Avenue, Rochester 4, N. Y.

We cannot translate the Rochester story into national history in one brief article. But we may be able to suggest some aspects of the dual relationship by hastily reviewing the principal occasions on which national events determined the course of developments in Rochester and by noting a few instances in which the city supplied the location or the personnel for significant action on the national level.

The dearth of historical monuments in this area is not a negative reflection of a disinterest in its past but a positive indication of the character of its history. The lower Genesee has fortunately escaped the fate of some more strategically located regions where the marches and countermarches of contending armies have left, along with the shattered bones of their dead, the traditions which most readily invite memorial tablets. The Niagara frontier to the west, the Champlain country to the east, the border states between the North and the South, and many Atlantic and Gulf ports have more vivid tales of valor to relate, yet we will be as grateful as our predecessors if we continue to escape such honors.

For somewhat similar strategic reasons, Rochester has never in the past contributed a major figure to the national political arena. The city has, as we shall see, injected an occasional issue of importance and played its part in other ways, but the balance between Metropolitan New York and upstate has usually been such that the leading candidates have arisen from larger or more sharply contested communities. Two of Rochester's ablest mayors, Henry L. Fish and James G. Cutler, attracted support as possible gubernatorial nominees, but on the first occasion Grover Cleveland of Buffalo, and on the second, Charles Evans Hughes of New York, received the party's designation, carried the election and moved forward to national prominence. Yet neither of these distinguished men has left an impact on the

country's history comparable to that of Susan B. Anthony. The recent nomination and election of Kenneth B. Keating as the state's junior senator gives the city its first entry into that august body.

Miss Anthony, Rochester's most prominent representative on the national scene, lost most of her battles but effectively launched a great movement and did so by the sheer force of her determination with little support from her home town. Frederick Douglass and Walter Rauschenbusch, the two Rochesterians who, next to Miss Anthony, are most frequently mentioned in American history texts, drew more of their strength from the city, but they likewise represented personality rather than regional triumphs. Nevertheless, these and a few other residents, such as George Eastman, Emma Goldman and Marion B. Folsom, linked Rochester with the nation's history, and we will see that there have been interesting connections, too, between national events and local developments.

History Chooses a Site

Although the Rochester site has had little strategic importance from a military point of view and has long since been overshadowed commercially by Buffalo and Toronto, it is interesting to note that these two considerations helped at the start to determine its location in time and space. The sheltered expanse of Irondequoit Bay seemed an ideal entry port to La Salle in 1669, and to Denonville eighteen years later, as they attempted their respective commercial and military invasions of the Seneca country to our south. Neither achieved his goal or left a permanent mark on the area, though they may have pointed a prophetic finger at the proper site for a great St. Lawrence commercial port—a question now again raised by the progress of the Seaway.

The French, however, faltered and eventually lost to the British whose firmer grasp on the Atlantic coast assured their triumph over the more expansive empire to the north. However the British, responding in their turn to the vast potentialities of the upper lakes, likewise neglected those on the lower Genesee and planted their forts and trading posts at Niagara and further west. Thus the Rochester site awaited the arrival of permanent settlers advancing over inland trails from the centers of population in the new republic that arose along the seaboard.

It was nearly a century and a half after La Salle's first visit to the Genesee that the river again acquired potential significance as a trade artery. The first wave of settlers had moved up the Mohawk from the east and up the Susquehanna from the south in the 1790's, but few of them chose the lowlands along the Genesee whose north-flowing current led towards British Canada. They endeavored to keep their lines of communication open to the older settlements on the Atlantic, which provided both a source for needed supplies and an indispensable market for the produce of the frontier. Several early adventurers tried to promote the obvious advantages of the lower Genesee as a townsite during the 1790's, but none prospered. Indeed it was not until the Embargo and Non-intercourse acts, adopted at the bidding of Jefferson and Madison, had glutted the eastern markets and prompted back-country settlers to seek a new outlet for their trade, that the prospects of the Genesee began to brighten.

As national and international events again brought the commercial potentialities of the Genesee into view, several rival sites contended for preference. A settlement known as Tryon Town sprang up at the head of Irondequoit Bay with an easy portage to the Genesee above the falls. Another, named Char-

lotte, appeared at the mouth of the river, backstopped by Hanford's landing at the foot of the lower falls. Nathaniel Rochester, who with two associates had purchased the choice hundred-acre site at the upper falls a few years before, determined in 1811 to lay out a town site there and began the next year to attract settlers and to develop its water power.

The contest between these rival settlements was decided by still another international event, the War of 1812. The presence of a small fleet of British gunboats on Lake Ontario not only halted trade across the lake but prompted settlers at Charlotte to move inland, several of them to Rochester. The upper Genesee became the chief supply artery for the American forces along the Niagara frontier and made Rochester the chief depot. While its mills were kept busy converting the grain into flour, the trade through Tryon Town languished. Before the return of peace Rochester had pulled ahead of all local rivals.

The War of 1812 likewise eliminated the one remaining chance that a lake port might yet take precedence over the falls town. The New York legislature had determined, shortly before the outbreak of hostilities, to construct a canal west from the Hudson at Albany to the Great Lakes. The original scheme, to follow the Mohawk River to the vicinity of Rome and then to swing north into the Oswego valley to its outlet in Lake Ontario, lost favor during the war when it became apparent that a British fleet on that lake might close the route during an emergency. The longer course west across the state to Lake Erie won adoption in 1817, and since that route would have to span the Genesee at some point between the main falls and the small upper falls, Rochester's future as a milling and trading center was assured.

The Erie Canal should not be dismissed so briefly. Although Rochester cannot claim credit for its inception or con-

struction, the city played a dynamic role in its early history. The trade which originated at the Genesee made a major contribution to its success, and Rochester was for a decade or so one of the favorite stops on the canal. The original aqueduct, with its eleven Roman arches, supplied an unforgettable symbol of American progress during the 1820's. Yet the canal's surging commerce soon outgrew that first aqueduct, and it had to be replaced by a much larger and more sturdy structure. The second aqueduct, completed in 1842, is still standing and has, since the early 1920's, provided the foundation for Broad Street bridge. Students and adults who pause to view it today can easily reconstruct a picture of the busy canal traffic which passed over the aqueduct more than a century ago.

The City's First Contributions

Rochester's growth prior to the completion of the canal in 1825 reflected state or national and even international events. Its passive position in the stream of American history was again revealed in 1821 when the new county, organized to encompass the lower Genesee valley, with Rochester as its seat, took the name of Monroe as a tribute to the president who had only the year before steamed past the mouth of the river without stopping. Fortunately none of the 1500 residents took it as a slight, but in the fifteen boisterous years that followed many of them acquired a new conception of their local prospects and of their own importance. As the first settlement in America to bound from 1000 to 12,000 within fifteen years, Rochester created the prototype of the boom town which would become a recurring and sometimes a disturbing feature of the nation's history.

Rochester's most sensational contribution in the national political arena sprang from the lusty energies of its boom period. A weird series of incidents in neighboring villages triggered the

Anti-Masonic movement, but it was Rochester that gave it political form. The abduction of William Morgan, a disgruntled Mason at Batavia who had threatened to publish the secrets of Masonry, took place at Canandaigua, and, while he was apparently carried through Rochester under armed guard in a carriage, his murder or final disappearance occurred at or near Lewiston on the Niagara River. Indignation over the atrocity spread widely, but it was in Rochester that Thurlow Weed and others converted the protests into a political movement to discredit the Masons who held prominent positions in both the Clintonian and Bucktail factions of the dominant party.

Weed's success in forming an Anti-Masonic Party gave him a regional victory and took him to Albany where he soon emerged as a key figure in the new Whig Party. While he never sought major political office, his consummate back-stage skill enabled him to safeguard and direct Whig fortunes in the state and to exert a considerable influence on the national level. It was his protegee, William H. Seward, who came to Rochester in October, 1858, after both had moved over to the new Republican Party, and delivered the famous "Irrepressible Conflict" speech at Corinthian Hall. Although the speech and its inflammatory phrase failed to attract much attention at the time, historians have credited it with inciting an increasing hostility which obstructed Seward's nomination for the Presidency and ultimately precipitated the Civil War.

* * * * *

Rochester's great boom subsided in 1829. The impetus given to speculation in town lots and other ventures by the construction of the canal had spent itself in the early years of operation, and many found that they had overestimated local values. In the period of uncertainty that followed, many residents, dis-

illusioned by the collapse of extravagant material prospects, responded with emotional zeal to the pleas of the evangelist, Charles G. Finney. His first great revival at Rochester in the winter of 1829-1830 lit a religious prairie fire that swept over much of upstate New York and transformed many crude frontiersmen and free-thinking adventurers into sober and pious citizens. Rochester became a stronghold for Bible and tract societies, a banner city for Sunday schools, a staunch supporter of home and foreign missions. Soon a scattering of church steeples dominated its skyline and helped to make the Flour City of the 1840's a fairly characteristic representative of the rising urban centers of the young nation.

While the evangelistic ardor inspired by Finney nurtured many stable and conservative religious and educational institutions, other and more intense fires were kindling new movements in outlying areas. It would be difficult to establish positive evidence of a close relationship between the Rochester revival and the spread of Mormonism from nearby Palmyra, yet they sprang from the same regional malaise following the canal's construction. Joseph Smith's dream and his discovery of the golden plates slightly antedated Finney's stay in Rochester, but the translation and printing of the "Book of Mormon" occurred at that same time. None of the elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, organized at Fayette 50 miles east of Rochester in 1830, came from the city, but several local residents were intrigued by the new doctrines and a few later joined in the trek west.

Rochester had a closer relation with the rise of modern Spiritualism. The young Fox sisters first heard their mysterious rappings in the modest cottage of their parents at Hydesville a few miles east of Palmyra in 1848. Their father, John D. Fox, had recently resided as a blacksmith at Rochester, and his

eldest daughter, already a widow, still lived there as a music teacher. It was to her home on Troup Street that the younger Fox sisters removed that spring or summer, and there the rappings were resumed in October. Rochester, a city of 25,000 and eighteenth in size in the land, had its men of science, its doctors of divinity and other savants by this date and could not easily be deceived. However, this very circumstance made it possible for the bewildered observers of the strange rappings to arrange a public hearing before a committee of respected citizens at Corinthian Hall, the city's chief center for lectures and music. And when three successive committees confessed their inability to detect any natural origins for the strange sounds, the fame of the Fox sisters and of the spirits they represented spread widely throughout the world. They enrolled few followers in Rochester, but the city did become the mecca for frequent pilgrimages of devout spiritualists on the anniversaries of the faith. A small obelisk, which stands today at the junction of Troup Street and the Inner Loop, serves as a reminder of the Fox sisters and of the fact that Rochester provided at least the crib at the birth of modern Spiritualism.

A contemporary of the Fox sisters, Susan B. Anthony held her first public meetings at Rochester shortly after the departure of the spiritualists. Miss Anthony's causes included temperance and education, but she devoted most of her energy to the battle for woman's suffrage; indeed she made Rochester, despite its reluctance, one of the principal centers of that agitation. The city gave her little support, and the local press generally reflected the popular scorn in which she was held in Rochester until the eve of her seventieth birthday in 1890. Gradually, however, local sentiment changed as reports of Miss Anthony's visits to Queen Victoria and other dignitaries abroad shook the self-confidence of her home-town critics. Fortunately

Miss Anthony was able, during her last 16 years to enjoy the growing affection as well as respect of her fellow Rochesterians, though she did not live to see the adoption of the 19th amendment in 1920.

Several other local residents of the early years wrote their names in national history books. Perhaps the best known, next to Miss Anthony, was Frederick Douglass. A fugitive slave who later purchased his own freedom, Douglass published the *North Star* at Rochester and won Lincoln's consent for the enlistment of Negroes as full-fledged members of the Union armies. Henry O'Reilly, another local editor of the early period, became a vigorous promoter of telegraph lines throughout the country. His enthusiasm attracted many Rochester men into that field, and in 1856 several of them, headed by Hiram Sibley, organized the great Western Union. When O'Reilly, who had long since left the city, was frozen out by the Sibley firm, he took the lead in organizing America's first anti-monopoly movement primarily to battle his former Rochester associates. Thus the old Flour City, with scarcely 50,000 residents, found itself aligned on two sides of one of the crucial issues in American history during the post-Civil War period.

Rochester had played its part too in that great sectional struggle. It rallied promptly to President Lincoln's successive calls for troops, and it contributed in other ways to the Union cause. Its most dramatic service was that performed by Colonel Patrick O'Rorke, a Rochester native who led the 140th New York State Regiment, likewise from Rochester, in an heroic defense of Little Round Top during the Battle of Gettysburg. Their interpid stand there helped to turn the tide of victory in that contest and in the war as a whole. O'Rorke fell with twenty-five of his men, but his memory lived on and helped to dispel the nativist feelings and anti-Irish prejudices that had

occasionally erupted in the Flour City in earlier years.

Local Contributions to Industrial Growth

Rochester took a more active part after the Civil War in America's industrial expansion than in other aspects of its history. Several local inventors contributed significantly in this field, while a few just missed making important technological breakthroughs. Moreover the industrial revolution, in this city as elsewhere, aggravated the labor and welfare problems and created new social dilemmas. Again a number of irrepressible Rochesterians arose whose forthright stands won recognition throughout the country.

The enterprise of many newcomers helped to build the new shoe and clothing industries that achieved leadership in post-Civil War Rochester. Thus the city shared the benefits derived from the great host of immigrants who came to America in these decades. Many brought fresh ideas as well as skills, and a small band of local shoe workers called a convention in 1868 which reorganized the secret bands of St. Crispins as a national union in that trade. The city's convenient geographic location as well as the vitality of local labor groups brought the second National Industrial Congress to Rochester in 1874. It was, apparently, sheer chance that also made Rochester the site in 1901 for the formation of the first Socialist Party. That was a fringe movement, comparable to the anarchist agitation which found a noteworthy exponent at Rochester in Emma Goldman although she won few local followers. Yet the dynamic character of organized labor groups in Rochester around the turn of the century was not a fortuitous circumstance, for the city was then a more typical center of American industry than it is in the present highly technical phase.



However, Rochester's major contributions to economic history have occurred in the technological field. A simple list of local inventions would no doubt be impressive; unfortunately no complete record has been assembled, but even a partial one will be sufficient to demonstrate our point. Ranging as they did from the automobile to the voting machine, from a cigarette cutter to a flexible photographic film, these inventions provided strategic advances that helped to transform America's slow-moving commercial-agrarian economy into one dominated by a virile industrial technology.

Yet even its most complicated inventions had their major historical influence in social rather than technological fields. Thus in the case of the voting machines, first designed by Jacob H. Meyers in the mid nineties, it was the impact of these new devices on the good government movement and on the development of American democracy that proved most significant. Yet while these potentialities helped to inspire Meyers and a few of his early associates, the contest between rival inventors soon commanded first attention.

Great excitement surrounded the first ballot machine factory on Mill Street in the fall of 1896 when the workmen rushed to complete the seventy machines ordered by the city for use in the election that November. The machines were finally installed a day before the polls opened. Most of them worked satisfactorily, but a few broke down, and Meyers decided to withdraw them and perfect a new model. However, William P. Davis, a skilled assistant who withdrew to form a separate company, first perfected an improved machine and received the city's contract the next year. The resulting contest aligned Rochester backers on opposite sides of a sharp contest between the two

firms for several years, but the controversy at least helped to call the new voting method to the public's attention.

Rochester experimented unsuccessfully with several devices a decade or so before their time, such as the use of compressed air for power, but fortunately the city's triumphs were sufficiently numerous to encourage further efforts. Rochester also learned, by bitter experience during the depression of the mid-nineties, that its best hope for prosperity lay in the development of quality not quantity production—a lesson the country at large is only in recent years beginning to master.

A careful study of the history of almost any invention will shed much light on the process of industrial growth. Take the case of George B. Selden's automobile. His interest was aroused when an epidemic disrupted the city's horse-drawn transit service. He had to eliminate several possible alternatives—steam and electricity—before he concentrated on an internal gas-combustion engine. Fortunately, sufficient progress had been made elsewhere in the development of stationary engines to enable him to select the combination of parts and functions necessary and appropriate for a road-driving machine. He got such a combination into working order by 1879 and made application for a patent. However, his inability to raise funds for its promotion delayed further developments for several years, and Selden, primarily a patent lawyer, contented himself with annual amendments to the patent forms in order to delay its date of issue. Other inventors, some with enterprising backers, began to take up the work a decade later, and the pioneer automobile factories arose in other cities. Despite some minor ventures in Rochester, the city's major role in the industry was as the home of the chief patent holder whose efforts to protect his rights produced a famous and protracted patent controversy which was not finally concluded until 1911.

Rochester often found itself on the other side of such technological and legal contests. The most notable case was that between the Eastman Kodak Company and the heirs of the Goodwin patent. Eastman, who had perfected his own processes independently and had developed them into a great industry, had to make a \$5,000,000 payment to the holders of the rival patent which had never been actively promoted. It was a costly penalty for his failure to acquire that patent at an earlier date, as he did so many others which seemed to promise a firmer hold on photographic technology. Yet it is interesting to note that Eastman was facing, at the same time, anti-trust investigations which ultimately required a totally different adjustment to potential and real competitors. The difficulties encountered by the Eastman Kodak Company in the first decades of the twentieth century have only in part been resolved, for they lie at the heart of the problem of determining the proper procedure for industrial growth in a democratic society.

George Eastman won a sure place in American history in a variety of ways. His Kodak, introduced in 1888, and a year later his flexible film, each played a significant role in the transformation of the nation's leisure-time activity. Rochester's tobacco factories, the first to shift from plug tobacco to cigarettes, were similarly tied to the country's social history, but Eastman had other influences as well. An urgent need for technological research prompted his early support of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and other training schools and eventually made him one of the nation's leading backers of higher education. His interest in music was personal, or derived from his mother, yet it inspired rich endowments for what became the largest school of music in the world. His concern for dentistry led him to establish a series of clinics that helped to push America into the front rank in this field. His reaction to the

corrupt politics that plagued Rochester in his early years was less direct than that of the inventor of the voting machine, but Eastman did eventually find an instrument to promote good government in the Bureau of Municipal Research which he brought to Rochester in 1915. He admired the painstaking surveys of its prototype, the New York Bureau, in the search for data to support cautious recommendations. It is not surprising that Eastman also made a contribution in the field of social welfare where his organizing talent supplied leadership for the development of the Rochester Community Chest, the first in the land to combine private charity and war-time appeals in the same drive.

Varied Contributions in Other Fields

No Rochesterian has had as many claims to national recognition as George Eastman. Yet several others exerted a sharper imprint on specific phases of American history. Lewis H. Morgan, widely hailed as the country's pioneer anthropologist, Henry A. Ward, avid promoter of natural science museums, Charles Mulford Robinson, champion of the city beautiful, and Clinton Howard, the "Little Giant" of prohibition, all left their marks on the national record. But no one exerted a more indelible influence than Walter Rauschenbusch whose version of the social gospel haunts the conscience of America.

These striking personalities and a dozen more during the last half century each achieved a national reputation and exerted an appreciable impact on developments in his field. The variety of their accomplishments illustrates the broadening relationship between the city and the nation at large.

Lewis Henry Morgan, whose probing studies of Indian and other family structures commenced in the fifties and continued for three decades, fostered the growth of several intellectual

coterics in Rochester. His major work, *Ancient Society*, published in 1877, was the city's most significant contribution in the realm of letters and won him the title of Father of American Anthropology. He depicted man's cultural development as advancing in successive stages from savagery through barbarism to civilization, and while the classification has long since been modified and outgrown, his basic attitudes toward social institutions have become deeply imbedded in later scientific methods.

Henry A. Ward was a less creative scholar, yet his unrelenting search for natural artifacts and his zeal in promoting their display led more or less directly to the establishment of many of the major museums of natural history in America today. A somewhat kindred spirit, Louis Swift, the self-taught Rochester astronomer, attracted popular fame as the first discoverer of numerous comets. After several years of increasing impatience with the cloud banks over Rochester, he journeyed to Pasadena to open the first observatory in its then unblemished horizon, thus planting the seed which has since produced the largest observatories in the World.

Charles Mulford Robinson provided a less tenuous link between local and national history. His early articles in the Rochester press on the attractions he found in European cities during a trip abroad soon won him an audience in national periodicals. His writings, which quickly took book form, highlighted certain features of the newly emerging city-planning movement. It is quite fitting that this champion of the city beautiful, whose early death cut short a brilliant national career, should be honored locally by Robinson Drive, one of the loveliest of Rochester's many park lanes.

The career of Professor Rauschenbusch aptly illustrates the intimate relation between a man's personal experience and his

intellectual heritage, between local and national currents of thought and articles of faith. Young Rauschenbusch, as a lad in Rochester, received a strong infusion of personal faith from his father, a professor of German Baptist theology. He had a chance to test it and to reassess its doctrines in later studies abroad and in a number of intense trials during his pastorate in New York City. But it was only after his return to Rochester, where he was daily forced to apply his theories to the successive experiences of an industrial community with which he was intimately acquainted, that he evolved his fresh and forceful version of the social gospel. Other men in other cities were working and thinking along the same lines, but few of them wrote such clear and challenging volumes and none captured the imagination of the younger students of theology as Rauschenbusch did.

His far-reaching effects may be illustrated by citing the contribution of one of his students at the Rochester Theological Seminary, Edward J. Ward. Without waiting for his degree, Ward took a job as recreation director at Buffalo in order to give his social beliefs immediate application. He soon received a call to return to Rochester as head of the new social-center movement. Under his direction four well-equipped schools in congested districts of the city were opened for use by neighborhood adults in the evenings and on week ends. Soon they evolved a fresh pattern of community expression which attracted praise in national journals and spread widely throughout the country. The experiment ran into trouble at Rochester and was soon abandoned, but it provided the inspiration for new developments elsewhere in neighborhood organization, community planning and urban-district integration in the years ahead. Rochester has, in the last decade, resumed its efforts in these fields.



The zeal which animated many Rochesterians in the early years of the century, when in varied capacities they strove to create a city of quality, declined sharply after Versailles. Yet the new agencies, established by Eastman and others to promote public welfare and civic efficiency, have measurably stabilized Rochester's growth and tamed most of its impulsive outbursts. The first reaction to the appearance of a new problem, or the resurgence of an old one, was to create a committee to study the situation. This procedure was becoming prevalent in older cities throughout the country, but Rochester gave it unusual application.

The institutionalization of society's responses to its urban problems has been deplored and parodied on numerous occasions, and Rochester has not escaped mention by this chorus. But it is worth noting that the committee approach has proved effective on occasion, locally as elsewhere. Moreover it has preserved an instrument of democratic participation during a period of increased specialization and the delegation of functions to professional groups.

An excellent example of both the efficiency and the democratic responsibility of the committee system was afforded at Rochester during the early years of the great depression. The work of its Civic Committee on Unemployment not only explored, at the grass-roots level, several of the techniques later applied on a national basis but also served by one means and another to cushion the early impact of the hard times. Almost anybody with an idea got a chance to try it out as chairman of a subcommittee. Meyer Jacobstein's fair-standards code found a place in the N.R.A.; Earl Weller's attempt to get accurate statistics of the unemployed sparked an assumption of that task by state and federal officials; the efforts of an older Community

Conference Board were revived, and new plans for the stabilization of employment were drafted; a great drive for voluntary pledges to undertake unscheduled improvements or make other specific expenditures pointed the way for Hoover's campaign to put idle dollars to work; fourteen local firms set an example to others throughout the country by adopting schemes for unemployment insurance of the workers in their respective factories.

Marion B. Folsom, who had initiated and supervised the drafting of an unemployment insurance plan for the Eastman Kodak Company, took the lead in prompting the other local firms to make a simultaneous announcement of such programs. He was soon drawn into the nation's service in various capacities. Roosevelt first appointed him to the President's Advisory Council on Economic Security in 1934. There he helped draft the Social Security Act; he later served on the advisory councils set up by succeeding administrations when confronted with demands for its amendment. He was a member for fifteen years of the New York State Advisory Council on Unemployment, and he gave generously of his time to the work of the Rochester Council of Social Agencies, serving as its president for three years. Few were surprised when President Eisenhower named him to the Cabinet in 1955 as Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

There is of course little fanfare connected with the duties of such a department, but Folsom was not interested in publicity except as an aid to more effective programs and more adequate appropriations. He had an opportunity there to direct the considerable revision of the Social Security program, greatly extending its application in 1956. While that remained his major field of interest, he found occasion to forward the cause of group health insurance, and that of public support for educa-

tion. Indeed he won positive advances by integrating some of the health and educational programs and by stressing the provision of more support for medical and other research projects. His plan for federal aid in the construction of new school buildings seemed on the verge of securing Congressional approval when the launching of the Russian sputniks diverted attention to the need for scientific research.

Folsom was not caught unprepared. He had previously urged federal support for advanced research as well as for the college training of brilliant but impecunious students. Yet his liberalism in these programs was a cautious one, never impulsive or dramatic. His proposals were, above all, financially sound. Moreover they gave due recognition to the functions of the states as administrators and to the prerogatives of the individual and the local community as the initiators of action. But his reports also re-emphasized the responsibility of the Federal Government in each field, and Folsom conscientiously pressed both the President and Congress for the needed funds. One commentator has called his work revolutionary, but this is true only in a limited sense of that term and because of the fundamental character of the social changes his measures proposed. Few national programs had a more far-reaching application than those of his department, and yet his even-tempered manner and scrupulous concern for actuarial detail won favor even in conservative circles. Thus Rochester's most effective contribution to the national scene represented the spirit of his community more accurately than most of the other national figures it produced.

While Kenneth Keating is the first Rochesterian to win election to the U. S. Senate, several of the city's representatives in the lower house have had creditable careers and attained some national prominence. Few of them, however, served a suf-

ficient number of terms to achieve seniority on important committees. At least two made their most significant contributions after their retirement from Congress: Freeman Clarke, who became Comptroller of the Currency under Lincoln, and Meyer Jacobstein whose economic leadership matured, as we have seen, during the depression years. However both James Breck Perkins around the turn of the century and Ken Keating during the past decade attained sufficient stature in the halls of Congress to influence national legislation. And significantly enough, their major fields of activity—foreign affairs and civil rights—and the stands they took reflected the idealism rather than the material interests of their Rochester constituents.

Yet if there is any field more important for contemporary America than that encompassed by health, education and welfare, it is international relations. It seems, therefore, highly appropriate, in concluding this brief review, to observe that Rochester has begun, after many decades, to assume a positive rather than a passive role here. The city has supplied an assistant secretary for the State Department, and several residents have on occasion served on its advisory committees or performed other functions. But the major contributions here have been of an indirect, almost intangible character.

The real achievements in this arena are not, after all, the formal agreements made over the conference table. Equally if not more important are the binding ties of trade, of good will and understanding, developed among the peoples of different nations. Rochester has made significant contributions in this respect by organizing the largest United Nations Association in the country, the first Teen Age Diplomats program, the Non-Western Studies course at the University of Rochester and similar ventures. Rochester did not initiate but through Professor Dexter Perkins at the university it quickly assumed leadership

in maintaining the American Studies Seminars at Salzburg, Austria, where scores of American professors participate in a series of month-long sessions that attract hundreds of European students and young adults each year. Still another example of the cultural exchange developed between Rochester and the world outside America is the series of international conferences on nuclear physics conducted by the physics department at the university during the last several years. The active foreign trade of many local firms and the subsidiary branches several of them maintain in distant lands are additional aspects of the city's broadening horizon. The Rochester-Rennes Twinning program is another manifestation of this activity. All of these and other expressions of international goodwill combined to prompt the World Brotherhood Association to name Rochester as the first major city to receive an award for its contributions in the field.

Thus Rochester has played a distinctive if modest part in the nation's history. The evidence we have reviewed could no doubt be duplicated in slightly different form for most other cities, yet attentive students and interested adults in this community will perhaps gain a richer sense of their national heritage by recalling some of its regional aspects. The alert citizen may also acquire a better appreciation of his role, and see it in its proper depth, by viewing it in this dual perspective.

CONTENTS OF VOLUMES XIX-XX

Volume XIX, 1957

- No. 1 January—*A City Historian's Holiday*,
by Blake McKelvey
- No. 2 April— *Samuel Parker Moulthrop, Devoted Educator and
Good Citizen*, by Blake McKelvey
- No. 3 July— *Rochester's Metropolitan Prospects in Historical
Perspective*, by Blake McKelvey
- No. 4 October—*The Irish in Rochester, An Historical Retrospect*,
by Blake McKelvey

Volume XX, 1958

- No. 1 January—*The Germans of Rochester, Their Traditions and
Contributions*, by Blake McKelvey
- No. 2 April— *Our City Today, Some Facts and Figures of Economic
and Civic Import on Rochester, New York*,
by Blake McKelvey
- No. 3 July— *The Decline of Whiggery, and the Formation of the
Republican Party in Rochester: 1848-1856*,
by Aida DiPace Donald
- No. 4 October—*A History of Social Welfare in Rochester*,
by Blake McKelvey

